

# MEDINA COUNTY JUVENILE AND PROBATE COURT NEWSLETTER

JUDGE KEVIN W. DUNN JANUARY 2015

## WELCOME MAGISTRATE ALICIA HATHCOCK

Born and raised in Medina, Ohio, Alicia Hathcock is returning to serve as a magistrate in her beloved hometown.

After graduating from Medina High School in 1996, Hathcock left Medina to attend Baldwin Wallace University where she earned her undergraduate degree in political science in 1999 and began working as a representative for the State Treasurer's Office.

"I liked working there," she said. "That job gave me a lot of opportunity to travel and make connections, but I decided I wanted to advance my degree."

Although there is no one else in her family with a career in law, Hathcock says it has always piqued her interest.

"I decided to go to law school kind of on a whim and continue to work full time," she said. "It was very overwhelming."

In 2000, she began law school at Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. Shortly after, Hathcock left the State Treasurer's Office and took a position as a law clerk with the firm Reminger and Reminger.

"I helped prepare documents for cases at that firm and stayed for about one year, but once I passed the bar, I became an associate at Oberholtzer, Filous and Lesiak."

During her time with the firm, Hathcock got her first experience working with the Medina County Volunteer Guardianship Program as an attorney for the applicants and served as a guardian herself to numerous wards.

"I appreciated the opportunity to give someone a chance in their life that they may not have been able to achieve on their own," she



Judge Dunn with Magistrate Hathcock after her swearing in January 5, 2015.

said. "I remember this one gentleman who was in his late 50s, mentally ill and living at home with his father. He wanted so badly to live on his own. It took about one year to get the proper services in place, but we got him into his own home and provided him a little more independence."

Hathcock remained at Oberholtzer, Filous and Lesiak until 2007 when she had the opportunity to become partner at her new firm Lesiak, Hensal and Hathcock. It was here practicing estate planning and probate issues where Hathcock further developed her relationship with the Probate Court. This firm is also where she worked alongside the future Judge Jennifer Hensal, later leaving to become Judge Hensal's judicial attorney for the 9th District Court of Appeals in early 2013.

"I learned a lot about criminal law during that time," she said. "I would research law and advise Judge Hensal before a case."

Hathcock credits Judge Hensal for being a supportive mentor in her life.

"I went from a clerk, to an associate, to a partner alongside her," she said. "She has always been supportive so when this opportunity as a magistrate arose, we had a long discussion and she agreed that I had to take advantage."

Taking her seat in the Medina County Probate and Juvenile Court in January of this year, Magistrate Hathcock will be responsible for handling the majority of probate matters and will assist with juvenile cases when needed.

"I'm thrilled to be back in Medina and here at the Court," she said. "It's so nice to see everyone again. It feels like coming home."

## DISTRICT MOCK TRIAL HELD AT COURTHOUSE



and Hathaway Brown School competed in the Medina District annual Mock Trial District Competition at the county courthouse January 30.

The students argued both sides of the mock case *Emerson Jones v. Buckeye Juvenile Correctional Institution*. In this case, a juvenile claims that his Eighth Amendment right

against cruel and unusual punishment is violated after he suffers a wrist injury while detained in the detention facility. Each team presented the case twice throughout the day, once as plaintiff and once as defense.

In Probate and Juvenile Judge Kevin Dunn's courtroom, Magistrate Susana Lewis and local attorney Matthew Ameer, Esq. scored the teams from Shaker Heights and Cloverleaf High School based on their understanding of the complex legal issues in the case, their cross examination and direct examination skills and opening and closing statements.

"The students were prepared and I was impressed by how much work they put into such a complicated case pattern," Magistrate Lewis

said. "I'm always impressed by kids who go outside of their comfort zone in exercises like this."

The mock trial district competition, coordinated by attorney Andrew M. Parker, Esq., is sponsored by the Medina County Bar Association.

The goal of the program, created by the Ohio Center for Law-Related Education, is to better inform students about their constitutional rights and responsibilities and to fill the void in law-related education. The program also assists students in developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

State finals for qualifying teams will be held in the Ohio Statehouse March 12-14, with the winning team advancing to the national competition.

**Medina County Probate and Juvenile Court will be closed for President's Day February 16, 2015.**

# MEDINA COUNTY JUVENILE AND PROBATE COURT NEWSLETTER

JUDGE KEVIN W. DUNN JANUARY 2015

## LEADERSHIP MEDINA CO. CLASSMATES SUMMONED TO JUVENILE COURT ON MOCK FELONY CHARGE

Four members of Leadership Medina County Class of 2015 had the opportunity to experience a simulated juvenile court case, playing the role of a troubled teen and his parents, January 14.

Their morning began when the class of forty stopped by the Medina County Juvenile Detention Center for their Government Day. During their visit at the MCJDC, Judge Kevin Dunn spoke to the class about what he believes creates a successful leader in any field. Traits include educating others on your process, encouraging others to be invested in the bigger picture and trusting your team to do their job to help obtain a shared goal.

"I don't come into the detention center every day and tell the superintendent or the staff here how to do their job," Judge Dunn said. "I tell Ron (Stollar, MCJDC Superintendent), it's your building. Run it, and if you need me, I'm here."

Before touring the 30-bed facility, Stollar spoke to the class about the rules juveniles must follow in the detention center, how the average length of stay for a resident is approximately 21 days, and the requirements that must be met before a juvenile can be admitted to the facility.

"Sometimes a kid can be so young and I worry about bringing him or her in here, but there are times it can be a positive thing because this may be the only way to get Court intervention for that child and get him or her into the necessary programs to help," Stollar said.

After the visit to the MCJDC and a quick trip to the county jail next door, members of the class were split into groups of four. The groups were given a task to complete utilizing government agencies they spent the morning learning about, all pre-planned by the Leadership Government Day Planning Committee.

While some teams had a pleasant task of obtaining a marriage license and permission to have their ceremony in the gazebo on the square, class members Kyle VanHoven, Holly Camino, Colin Johnson and Randy Fuerst were summoned to attend a hearing at Medina County Juvenile Court.

The mock first appearance hearing was organized and planned by Court Administrator Sharon Danko and Magistrate Susana Lewis,

both Leadership Medina County alumnis and members of the Leadership Government Day Planning Committee. In this case, Fuerst was playing the juvenile and charged with aggravated possession of drugs, a felony of the fifth degree. Fuerst was accompanied by his "parents," Camino and Johnson, and "step-mother," VanHoven.

Magistrate Lewis said an exercise such as this is important to keep the community informed of the Court's process and goal to help rehabilitate every juvenile who comes before them.

"The laws as they pertain to juveniles are different than those for adults," Magistrate Lewis said. "I think it's important for us a community to know what rights juveniles and victims have, the consequences juveniles may face for their actions, as well as what the Court does to help resolve these issues and rehabilitate the children."

Magistrate Lewis treated the class members as if they were in Court for an actual case, reading the charge and explaining rights. Magistrate Lewis also explained the mandatory and possible consequences Fuerst may face, including detention time at the facility where the class spent their morning.

While the class members will not actually return to complete the entire process and attend additional hearings as a juvenile in this situation would, Magistrate Lewis gave Fuerst the same interim orders a juvenile would have received and appointed Public Defender Tim Lutz as counsel, whom they met with after the hearing.

Lutz echoed the possible consequences Fuerst may face, adding how he stresses to juveniles in similar situations that the severity of this charge may earn him a suspended commitment to the Ohio Department of Youth Services, essentially juvenile prison, where he could be held until he reaches 21 years of age.

"It was more uncomfortable than I thought it would be," Fuerst said of the experience.

Junior Leadership Medina County students will also experience a similar mock trial when they visit the MCJDC in February.



Magistrate Lewis reads and explains the mock complaint and possible consequences to VanHoven, Camino, Fuerst and Johnson from Leadership Medina County Class of 2015.

### Fuerst's Mock Interim Orders:

**Verbal House Arrest**—Fuerst must be accompanied by a parent if leaving home, with the exception of attending school  
**No Drug or Alcohol Use**  
**No Profanity**

**Must follow all rules of the home and school**

**Must follow all laws**

**Parents are ordered to secure all medication in the home**